

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMCONSUL IZMIR

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1077

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L IZMIR 442

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: ELECTION VIEWS: RUMBLINGS AMONG THE YOUNG?

1. WE HAVE FRETTED DURING PAST YEAR ABOUT OUR INABILITY TO ESTABLISH ANY SUSTAINED DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG EDUCATED TURKS. THUS IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR US TO ASSESS THEIR MOOD AND TEMPER IN CONTEXT OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS.

2. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, A YOUNG AMERICAN WOMAN VISITOR TO IZMIR WHO HAS MET A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF HER TURKISH PEERS MADE SOME INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WHAT SEEMS TO BE ON THEIR MINDS.

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OUR INTERLOCUTOR IS 25, COLLEGE-EDUCATED, WELL-TRAVELLED AND SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO BE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE THAN INTELLECTUAL INTEREST TO YOUNG TURKISH

BLADES. AT LEAST HER CONVERSATIONAL TRYSTS SEEM MOSTLY TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN COFFEE HOUSES, SMALL RESTAURANTS AND IN THE APARTMENT OF A YOUNG TURKISH COUPLE WITH WHOM SHE WAS ACQUAINTED BEFORE VISITING TURKEY.

3. SHE DESCRIBES THESE YOUNG TURKS AS "SEETHING" WITH RESENTMENT AT LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE EVEN INTO LOWER RUNGS OF PROFESSIONS FOR WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN EDUCATED. WHILE MUCH OF THIS FEELING EXISTS AMONG YOUNG TURKISH MALES WHO MUST MARK TIME WHILE WAITING TO PERFORM MILITARY SERVICE, SHE CLAIMS THAT EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED MILITARY SERVICE THERE IS WIDESPREAD DISCONTENT BECAUSE THEIR EDUCATIONAL TRAINING AND TALENTS ARE NOT "RECOGNIZED". SHE NOTED THAT SOME YOUNG MALE TURKS ARE BEING TOLD BY TURKISH AUTHORITIES THAT THEIR INDUCTION INTO TURK ARMED FORCES NOT LIKELY TO BE SCHEDULED BEFORE

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4. SHE SAYS THAT DEGREE OF CYNICISM ABOUT POLITICAL PROCESSES IN TURKEY REMINDS HER OF "KENT STATE" DAYS IN U.S. AND THAT LEVEL OF BITTERNESS IS HIGH AND APPARENTLY SOARING. INTERESTINGLY, YOUNG TURKS WITH WHOM SHE HAS TALKED DWELL ON LACK OF OPPORTUNITY TO SUCH AND EXTENT THAT "IDEOLOGY SELDOM REARS ITS UGLY HEAD".

5. YOUNG TURKS TALK LONGINGLY ABOUT DOING GRADUATE WORK--PARTICULARLY IN WESTERN EUROPE AND U.S.--WHICH THEY SEE BOTH AS POSSIBLE ESCAPE HATCH FROM TURKEY OR ONLY MEANS OF ACHIEVING EMPLOYMENT MORE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR EDUCATIONAL TRAINING.

6. TOWARDS POLITICIANS--AT LEAST THOSE WHO REPRESENT WHAT THESE YOUNG TURKS PERCEIVE OF AS THE ESTABLISH-
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MENT--SHE SAYS THERE IS UNDISGUISED CONTEMPT. FOR THE MOST PART, THEY ARE RELATIVELY MILD IN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE MILITARY WHICH, IN OUR INTERLOCUTOR'S VIEW, MAY BE SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY LOATH ESTABLISHMENT POLITICIANS SO MUCH MORE.

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7. TO EXTENT THAT THEY TALKED ABOUT THE ELECTIONS, MOST OF HER ACQUAINTANCES SEEMED DISINTERESTED IN PARTY AFFILIATION AND "IF THEY HAD A HERO" IT WAS USUALLY ECEVIT. SHE SAID THAT THE MIXTURE OF CYNICISM, CONTEMPT FOR POLITICANS AND ANGER AT LACK OF OPPORTUNITY AMONG THESE YOUNG TURKS SEEMED TO MAKE THEM UNCERTAIN WHETHER THEY SHOULD EVEN BOTHER TO VOTE. THERE WAS LITTLE EVIDENCE, SHE SAID, THAT THEY THOUGHT IN TERMS OF GROUP ACTION.

8. SHE QUOTED ONE RECENT COLLEGE GRAD (ENGINEERING) AS SAYING: "AS A WAITER I EARN 900 TL A MONTH. I PROBABLY WON'T BE CALLED FOR MILITARY SERVICE FOR ANOTHER YEAR. THEN I'LL BE A LIEUTENANT FOR 18 MONTHS. BY THE TIME I GET OUT OF THE ARMY MY ENGINEERING DEGREE PROBABLY WON'T EVEN BE ENOUGH TO GET ME MY WAITER'S JOB BACK. MY ONLY HOPE IS TO FIND A RICH AMERICAN WIFE."
SMITH

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